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TIM RYAN
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
13TH DISTRICT, OHIO

July 2, 2019

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
AND RELATED AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Acting Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Secretary Esper, Secretary Bernhardt, and Secretary Chao:

I write to request information about President Trump's "Salute to America" event slated for July 4th, 2019 in Washington, DC. I am deeply concerned that your administration is wasting scarce defense, national park, and infrastructure funding on a demonstration of military strength through our nation's capital that the National Park Service has warned may damage the National Mall and other infrastructure.

As you well know, our transportation infrastructure is aging and in dire need of repair. The Park Service has a deferred maintenance backlog estimated at \$11.6 billion. Yet precious resources are being diverted to a public spectacle masquerading as a Trump campaign rally. Current and former Pentagon officials have repeatedly advised against military-style parades as inordinately costly and reminiscent of dictatorships in China, North Korea, and Iran. In a memo dated March 8, 2018, the Pentagon warned that the use of tanks in a parade could damage local infrastructure. Nevertheless, President Trump has defiantly ordered the deployment of Abrams tanks to the National Mall mere days before the event.

The American people deserve to understand the full cost of such behavior. To that end, I ask that you:

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WARREN, OH 44481
330-373-0074
330-373-0098 FAX

241 WEST FEDERAL STREET, SUITE 311
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330-740-0193
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1030 EAST TALLMADGE AVENUE
AKRON, OH 44310
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- Provide the projected cost of all activities associated with the “Salute to America” observance, including but not limited to the cost of deploying U.S. military assets, readying and/or repairing public land and infrastructure impacted by this deployment, paying additional personnel, and providing increased security;
- Identify which agencies will bear these costs;
- Provide a cost comparison between this year’s event and those in the prior ten years;
- Provide an explanation of the potential road damage caused by the deployment of 60-ton tanks and other military assets, as well as the cost of repairing each mile of affected road;
- Identify any bridges that may be affected and the cost to replace each bridge, should they become damaged; and
- List the national infrastructure—including units of the National Park Service—that may be affected and state whether the President's budget requested increased funding.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have a duty to avoid wasteful spending, be a good steward of taxpayer dollars, and promote accountability in the budget. This includes speaking out against the misuse of U.S. military assets and the overt politicization of our Armed Forces. Please provide expedited clarification on the issues raised above so I may better provide this oversight. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress